

Supply

raise children on an income of \$4,000 a year? The benefit itself is not indexed. Every year that benefit will be worth less and less, until one day it will probably disappear altogether.

Universality is being axed. That means money given to help maintain children is again a charitable policy of this government and not a right.

The government is also spending \$500,000 in newspapers across this country to advertise this new child benefit. The minister said it is new, improved, simpler and fairer. I am not sure about that. I do not think all the families denied these benefits will see it as being newer, simpler, fairer or more generous.

The government also promised a homemaker's pension in 1984. We have not seen any evidence of that. The child benefit, which is a bit of charity thrown to some families, is a large step away from recognizing the value of child rearing to our society. The universal family allowance was in some families the only money that a woman received in her own name. We know, and statistics tell us, that one in ten women is abused by the man she lives with. More often than not, this abuse is more than physical and sexual abuse; it is usually also economic and social control. The woman does not share in the family finances.

In addition to choking off funds from the Canada Assistance Plan, which funds shelters for battered women, the cancellation of family allowance means fewer economic resources for women to get away from and out of abusive relationships. The issue of children was used by our Prime Minister during the United Nations summit on the rights of the child in 1990. Article 18(2) of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child requires Canada to "render the appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child rearing responsibilities and shall ensure the development of institutions, facilities, and services for the care of children".

Section 18(3) requires the Canadian government to "ensure that children of working parents have the right to benefit from child care services and facilities for which they are eligible".

The new child benefit does not create one single child care space. It does not ensure quality care for Canadian children. It provides no greater access to care at all.

Before the budget we knew that one million Canadian children were in need of child care. After the budget nothing has changed, and we do not have even one new child care space.

This budget also contains another blow to economic equality for women. Between 1985 and 1990 women in the Public Service earned significantly less than men. The government promised that unfair situation would be rectified. Instead, the government has abandoned its promise to honour its pay equity commitment dating back to 1985. I remember, in the leaders' debate on women's issues, the Prime Minister standing up and responding that the money was there. It was in the bank and had been put aside for that pay equity legislation. Where has it gone? Did that bank account just disappear?

Seventy thousand women lost \$1 billion which they had already earned but never received.

The government has also promised to ignore a human rights tribunal ruling on this issue if it does not like that ruling. I suppose this is the only promise the government will keep.

This budget also attacks legal and social equality for women. The cancellation of the Court Challenges Program is a disaster for women. It is a disaster for aboriginal people, visible minorities, and the disabled.

Disabled women are far more likely than any other women to be sexually assaulted. Disabled women tend on average to be even poorer than disabled men who are also extremely economically disadvantaged. Disabled women have fewer economic resources to leave an abusive situation. Their physical options are also limited.

Many shelters for battered women do not have money for major renovations to make them accessible to the disabled. Disabled women have fewer housing options when they try to leave an abusive situation. Disabled women are bombarded with societal messages about inadequacy. They are disbelieved, treated as less than adults, patronized, and often have poor self-esteem as a result of social and economic discrimination.